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NEWSBYTES

F-16 shoots down MiG-29

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — An F-16CJ from the 31st Air Expeditionary Wing's 78th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron shot down a MiG-29 May 4.

An F-16 four-ship formation was on its way to a tanker when a NATO early warning aircraft said a hostile aircraft was airborne. The formation broke off refueling and intercepted the aircraft, shooting it down over northern Serbia, near Belgrade.

More reservists called up

WASHINGTON — A rescue wing will join more than 2,000 guardsmen and reservists called to active duty to support Operation Allied Force in Yugoslavia. The 120 members of the 939th Rescue Wing, Air Force Reserve, Portland, Ore., brings to 2,236 the total number of guardsmen and reservists activated under the presidential selective Reserve call-up.

Other units called include elements of the 117th Air Refueling Wing, Birmingham, Ala., which began deploying May 1; 931st Air Refueling Group, Wichita, Kan., which deployed May 1; and the 128th ARW, Milwaukee; 161st ARW, Phoenix; and the 171st ARW, Pittsburgh, began their deployments May 4.

Senate salutes military

WASHINGTON — The Senate passed a resolution April 30 designating May as National Military Appreciation Month. Speaking for the resolution, Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., said, "Great warplanes, warships, tanks and ground weapon systems are only as good as the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who man the front lines. American military service members are unique in their mission, their special culture and have a special place in our society."

Tinker shelters tornado victims

By Capt. Rich Curry
507th Air
Refueling Wing

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — An F4 tornado, one of the most powerful twisters, ripped through central Oklahoma May 3, carving a mile-wide path of destruction that stretched 25 miles from Norman north past Oklahoma City.

The storm that bore many funnel clouds flattened hundreds of homes, killed scores of people and left thousands homeless. For those in its path, it was devastating.

Within minutes after the tornado had passed, Tinker Air Force Base threw open its doors.

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Photo by April Creed

While Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., opened its gates to homeless tornado victims, base clean-up crews got to work. Above, crews begin near a base gate.

U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff calls CALCM a 'very good capability'

By Staff Sgt. Michael Dorsey
Headquarters U.S. Air Force

WASHINGTON — Briefing Pentagon reporters April 30 on Air Force efforts in Operation Allied Force, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan said the conventional air-launched cruise missile is a good weapon.

"It has worked very well for us over there," said the general, "and that's why we're going to build more.

"We have funding in right now to build 95," he said. He also said another request for about 230 more is in the works.

The chief also told reporters the

Air Force has accelerated these purchases so new missiles will be delivered this year instead of late 2000. "We want to build more after that," he said. "It's just a question on that buy of whether we go with new or used."

This accelerated delivery schedule is due to recent changes in the original CALCM production plan.

A \$41.3 million contract awarded to Boeing will convert 95 excess air-launched cruise missiles to Block I conventional ALCMs. Deliveries to the Air Force begin in November, eight months faster than originally planned.

The original Air Force plan after

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Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the

U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and e-mail address will be considered.

Warriors don't cry about tents

... (In) "TDY: No good in tents" (Letters, ONLINE NEWS, April 28, 1999), I just have one question. What happened to the "warrior spirit"? Are we not warriors? Do the recruits in basic not learn to be warriors? I don't recall classes in hotel survival during boot camp. Quit crying about having to live in a tent. You are a member of the greatest military in the world, act like a proud warrior.

Daniel R. Varga
Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio

TDYs no 'Club Med'

As I read the letter about tent city TDYs I was amazed by the attitude shown by the person writing. ... As for staying in hotels, it's nice when you are in an area where it is feasible to do so, but if there is a tent city, it's usually there so you can be protected by our security troops; reduce the danger to civilians downtown because of our presence there; and to keep you closer to your place of work. Keep in mind that when we joined the military, it was voluntary. If your recruiter promised you Club Med, look them up and settle it between yourselves.

Bryan Raines
Sheppard AFB, Texas

TDY not for personal gain

I sincerely hope we heard the minority voice in ... "TDY: No good in tents." I hope I don't belong to an Air Force where determination of where to stay when TDY is made based on how much an individual gets paid rather than on how best to accomplish the mission. ... individuals deployed should be even more aware that their place is where the mission is, not in some off-base hotel. Remember, there is often a difference between TDY and deployed, but no matter where you go on official orders, you are there to do a job, not to complain about how little money you make.

Master Sgt. Tess Ailshire
Kelly AFB, Texas

Service to country, not to self

... the letter ... pertaining to TDYs (is) a little disturbing. ... the comment about putting members in a hotel, just so they could make \$50 a day is not feasible. ... Imagine how much it would cost to pay every TDY person \$50 a day. ... I certainly agree that all the deployment requirements are taking their toll on military members and can only hope that they'll get better. Maybe the EAF will ease this problem, but until then we have to uphold our part of the contract when we decided to serve our country and not ourselves.

Tech. Sgt. Robert Love
Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

Despite being disdained, mocked and cursed...

Child's 'thanks' leaves airman speechless

By Senior Master Sgt. Carl Cooper

I was too tired to hit the commissary after work, so I stopped off at the grocery store to do a little shopping, hoping its crowd would be smaller. Much to my dismay it was packed. As I walked around with the basket with the funky wheel, I couldn't help but notice the looks I drew. I thought it might be the basket or maybe because I was in uniform. Whatever the case, the looks became stares, and I became increasingly uncomfortable.

I muddled through the express lane; the cashier never even shared a word with me; and I couldn't help but notice the rolling eyes and shake of the head as I nervously fumbled for my debit card. I was really feeling outside of my element navigating

through the sea of civilians without another blue suit in sight. I just wanted to get out of there or, at least, out of uniform.

As I dodged cars toward my parking space, I heard a voice from a distance call out, "Sir! Oh, sir!" I saw a young woman and her daughter bravely cross lanes of traffic to get to me, and for a split second I thought they had mistaken me for the police (or a bus driver). But then what she said to me hasn't left me and probably never will.

"I just wanted to thank you for all that you sacrifice in order to serve our country," she said. "We just wanted to tell you we appreciate you." Then her 3-year-old said, "Thanks for keeping us safe."

I was speechless. In two seconds my 15 years of service flashed before my eyes. I've endured places with no hot water, no heat in the winter nor coolness from the beating sun in the summer. I've shoveled snow, packed sand bags and loaded pallets

in searing heat for operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. I've been face down in the dirt more often than I care to remember and have been pushed to my physical limit often.

As a recruiter in my hometown I've had kids throw things at me, steal from me and mock me. Many counselors have disdained me, and parents cursed me. But never, never ever had anyone come up to say "Thank you" until that night outside the store.

I'm certain that lady would want me to pass on her message. We've all been through a lot — civilian and military alike. At times we feel misunderstood, at times even shunned and persecuted by the very same society we protect. But there are many out there who certainly appreciate our service.

Editor's Note: Sergeant Cooper's commentary originally appeared in the April 16 "Wingspread" newspaper, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.



Space operations take AF to high ground

WASHINGTON — As the Air Force evolves into an aerospace force, senior leaders say future military contingencies depend on controlling space.

"We're not going to space for the sake of space," Acting Air Force Secretary Whit Peters told senior leaders at an aerospace breakfast at the Pentagon April 26. "We're going to space because it helps us do a mission we have to do."

Calling space important because it helps implement national policy, he explained that "Space is not an independent operation. Individual programs mesh together to form a 'system of systems, mixing space assets with aircraft operations," he said.

For example, when a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft goes on a mission, the planes can send raw surveillance data via satellite to intelligence specialists in the United States who can analyze it and send it to Operation Allied Force's Combined Air Operations Center at Vicenza, Italy.

The data can then be sent to a pilot flying a strike mission. All this can be done within minutes and reduces the number of airmen who have to deploy, said Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael E. Ryan.

"We couldn't do the operations we're doing without space," General Ryan said.

In the case of Allied Force, Brig. Gen. Mike Drennan, commander of 21st Space Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., said that a multitude of space assets are used to support NATO's goals. Navigation, strike indicators, search and rescue, space weather combat support and communications all benefit from space systems and products that meet the needs of theater commanders.

Major units operating the 28 space systems within 14th Air Force include:

- 21st SW, Peterson AFB, Colo.

- 45th SW, Patrick AFB, Fla.
- 30th SW, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
- 50th SW, Schriever AFB, Colo.

One of the more well-known programs, the Global Positioning System, guides precision weapons such as Joint Direct Attack Munitions, conventional air-launched cruise missiles and Tomahawk land-attack missiles launched from aircraft and ships.

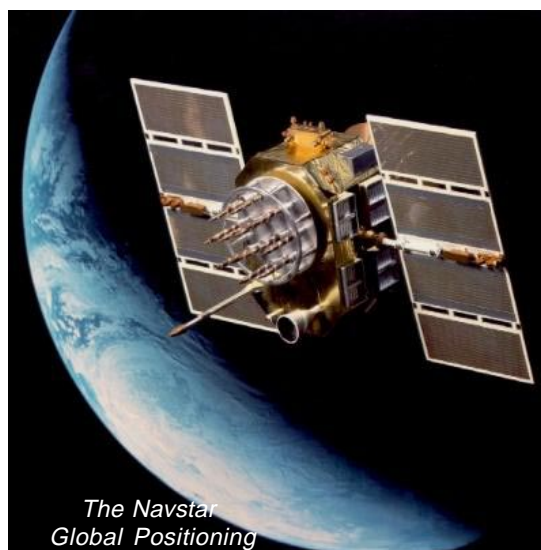
The main control station at 2nd Space Operations Squadron at Schriever AFB operates the constellation of 27 rotating satellites, six ground monitor stations and four ground antennas around the world. Ground antennas send navigation information using an S-band signal, as well as transmit commands to satellites. The base is also home to the Space Warfare Center that develops a rendezvous time for aircraft to extract downed pilots.

The warfare center also develops the Hook 112 survivable radio, a device that feeds from the GPS and helps locate a downed pilot within 100 meters.

"It helps remove the 'search' from search and rescue," General Drennan said.

In addition to search and rescue, GPS accuracy aids air refueling, mapping, geodetic surveys, ground troop movements and other missions. Mr. Peters couldn't stress enough that for a theater commander to receive pinpoint information in a matter of minutes depends on space assets.

However, as the Air Force evolves to a total aerospace force, it must face financial demands the space program presents.



The Navstar Global Positioning

System (GPS) is a constellation of orbiting satellites that provides navigation data to military and civilian users all over the world. The system is operated and controlled by members of the 50th Space Wing, located at Schriever AFB, Colo.

To show its commitment, the Air Force is investing 30 percent of its science and technology budget, more than double its current figure, to accelerate development of space operations vehicles, space-based radar and laser, and adaptive optics.

One of the most significant space accomplishments is the contract with Lockheed-Martin and Boeing for building Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicles at one-third the original cost. The contract saves the Air Force \$6 billion through the year 2020. EELV is the Air Force space lift modernization program that uses launch vehicles like Delta, Delta II, Titan II and Titan IV to carry GPS satellites and other assets into space.

Medical squadron CC board meets

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The 2000 Medical Squadron Screening Board takes place July 12-15 at the Air Force Personnel Center.

The board will choose candidates to fill medical squadron commander positions that open during the 2000 calendar year. Majors and lieutenant colonels, except colonel selects, will be considered during this board.

Officers who believe they meet eligibility requirements and have questions regarding the board should contact either

Lorraine Say or Col. Charles Armstead at DSN 665-4421. (AFPC News Service)

History channel special features T-Birds

The History Channel will feature the Air Force Thunderbirds on its special, "Into the Wild Blue: The World's Best Flight Teams," at 8 p.m. EDT May 8.

The program follows the teams through training to see how they learn to fly their aircraft a mere 18 inches apart. Viewers learn the history of aviation and discover what makes each team unique.



Tinker shelters tornado victims

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Up to 350 people from the base stepped up to help residents of nearby devastated Del City.

Tinker is also providing shelter for between 150 and 250 Del City residents in facilities across base. Tinker's fire, police and medical organizations have been working with community first-response agencies since the tornado left the vicinity around 9 p.m. The effort includes providing generator power, tents, lights, shelter, food and medical care for on- and off-base agencies.

Preliminary estimates are that Tinker sustained moderate damage on the extreme northwest corner of the base. There was no aircraft damage. The base's industrial capability is still intact. No work interruption is anticipated.

Shelters were set up in various areas around the base, which escaped major damage when the funnel clouds veered away from the installation.

Reservists from Air Force Reserve Command's 507th Air Refueling Wing and 513th Air Control Group along with their active-duty counterparts hurriedly put together a makeshift hotel for hundreds of people left with little more than the clothes on their backs.

Immediately after the storm had passed, 507th ARW members took a unit KC-135 out of its hangar to make room for survivors. Dozens of trucks rolled up to the hangar doors bringing with them the basics of survival.

In the hangar, volunteers began to set

up food lines and more than 300 cots. Bus after bus rolled up to the hangar doors bringing more survivors of what might become known as the worst tornado disaster in history. Their stunned faces were met with open arms and warm kindness.

"We're going to do everything we can

to support this disaster," said Col. Mark Pillar, 507th ARW vice commander. "And that's still not going to be enough."

All across the base military members rushed to help throughout the evening hours.

Search-and-rescue teams formed to search the rubble. Medical technicians reported to the base hospital, fitness center and 507th ARW hangar to provide care for those injured. At the

507th ARW hangar, one of three set up on the base, a makeshift processing line was formed to register people's names so others could know their loved ones were still alive.

Standing at the perimeter of what once was Del City, only 100 feet away from the base, twisted homes could be seen in the glare of portable military light-all units. Across the road where a thriving residential community once stood, there was nothing but splinters and rubble.

The tornado, which had earlier been headed directly for Tinker, swerved at the last minute, plowing through the heavily populated area. The twister skirted the perimeter of the base then thrust on northward.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Relatives seeking information on family members stationed at Tinker, or family members of persons being temporarily sheltered on base may call (405) 734-2535 or (405) 734-2545.

CALCM continued

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Desert Fox called for converting excess ALCMs to a new CALCM Block 1A configuration, which included improved guidance and anti-jam capability. Software development for the Block 1A configuration would have delayed the new CALCMs until July 2000.

However, continued CALCM use in Allied Force changed Air Force strategy. In late March, Air Force leaders decided to replace the expended missiles with duplicates of the current CALCM configuration. This reduced production time.

The Air Force received approval from Congress on April 20 to reprogram \$51.5 million from the Titan program for the CALCM Block I contract. Besides the 95 missiles, the Air Force also requested funds for 227 more missile bodies through a \$178.2 million emergency supplemental proposal to Congress. This would pay back the original \$51.5 million borrowed from the Titan IV space program.

B-52s launched 90 CALCMs during Operation Desert Fox, according to Lt. Col. Jim Herring, chief of Air Force bomber weapons requirements. The colonel said CALCMs remain a weapon of choice in Operation Allied Force.

"The CALCM brings a tremendous payload to the fight with minimal risk to our aircrews and aircraft," Colonel Herring said. He added that CALCM is a near-precision weapon that greatly limits collateral damage to civilian sites near military targets.

This article is available in its entirety online.



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